

PARENTS AND TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE PARENT
INVOLVEMENT

A Thesis

Presented to
the School of Education
Drake University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Administration

by Debra S. Chiodo

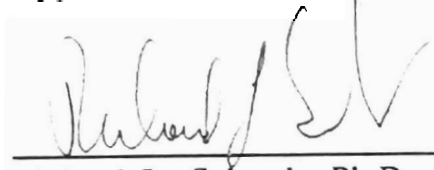
May 1993

PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE PARENT
INVOLVEMENT

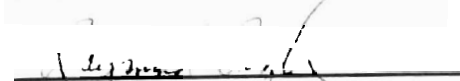
by Debra S. Chiodo

May 1993

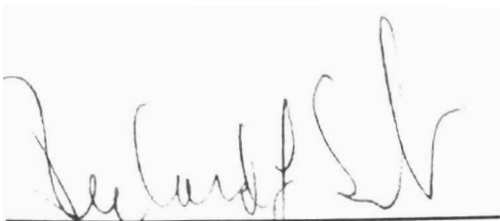
Approved by Committee:



Richard L. Schwab, Ph.D.



Raymond Pugh, Ph.D.



Richard L. Schwab, Ph.D.
Dean of the School of Education

Parents And Teachers Perceptions Of Effective Parent Involvement

An Abstract of a Thesis by

Debra S. Chiodo

May 1993

Drake University

Advisor: Richard Schwab

The purpose of this study was two-fold: to learn if parents and teachers have different perceptions of the ways parents can effectively be involved in their children's education and to learn what parents and teachers would suggest to improve parent involvement in the school.

These perceptions were measured using an original survey of two questions. The first question asked those surveyed to define parental involvement; the second question asked what the school could do to improve parental involvement. The participants included 117 parents and 16 teachers from an elementary school located in Des Moines Iowa.

Each response was recorded verbatim on individual note cards. The individual responses of both parents and teachers were then content-analyzed for each survey question. The note cards were sorted by the researcher looking for trends that would lead to common categories. A preliminary label was then assigned to each group of statement cards. The researcher reevaluated each set of cards looking at the individual statements to determine if they fit within a category. After reevaluating the statement cards several times, they were further subdivided according to common themes until each statement had been properly assigned within a category. A frequency count was completed for each category. The total number of surveys completed was then divided by the number of statements in each category to provide percentages for categories and sub-categories.

A team of experts was asked to validate the researcher's categorization of the responses by teachers and parents. The team included a female elementary principal, a male elementary principal, and a university professor who brought an analytical perspective to the team.

Six research questions were addressed regarding parental involvement. The first three evaluated what parents and teachers

each believe to be effective parent involvement and then how their perceptions are similar and different. **The last three evaluated what** parents and teachers each believe the school can do to improve parental involvement and how their perceptions are similar and different.

The study indicates that both parents and teachers define effective involvement using many of the same qualities but differ when determining how frequent parents should be involved. **Parents** and teachers both viewed communication as the most important factor in improving effective parent involvement.

This exploratory study provides the insight that the perceptions of both parents and teachers are not easily predictable nor can they be summarized in two or three statements. Both parents and teachers shared strong views about what they believe to be effective. **Among** the recommendations is that the school has a base of information in understanding the differences of both parents and teachers to tailor the parental involvement program to be more meaningful to both parties. The survey also provides topic for staff inservices to help staff better understand parent involvement from both parent and teacher perspectives.

Table of Contents

Chapter

1. Introduction	5
2. Review of the Literature	
Parents' Perspective.	14
Teachers' Perspective.	17
Related Studies	18
Summary	21
3. Method	
Introduction.	23
Research Question.	23
Methodology	24
Sample Population	26
Possible Limitations	26

4. Analysis of the Data	
.....	28
Research Questions	28
Research Question 1	29
Research Question 2	32
Research Question 3	33
Table One	34
Research Question 4	37
Research Question 5	40
Research Question 6	42
Table Two	44
5. Summary, Conclusions, Discussion, And Recommendations	
Finding 1	47
Finding 2	49
Finding 3	50
Finding 4	52
Finding 5	54
Finding 6	55
Recommendations	58
References	60

Appendix

A. Parent/Teacher Survey form	63
B. List of comments made by parents and teachers	65

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of parents in the education of their children is changing. Traditional PTA participation and homeroom mother volunteers, while still an important part of the school's support system, are being expanded. Parental participation now includes decisions about curriculum, school design, staffing, and in extremes, day to day operations. Though this movement has not always been as energetic or active, parents have historically been involved in a variety of organized activities that support the education and socialization of their children. The purpose of this study is to learn how parents and teachers describe effective parent involvement, and to learn what the schools can do to promote effective parent involvement.

During the 1800s families were primarily responsible for educating their children (Coleman, 1991). Children were taught manners, morals, occupational roles, and the attitudes of the family. This pattern of home and family education continued until communities began to change.

The complexity of the society and economy made families turn to formally established schools to deal with children's learning. The involvement of parents and community members participating in school governance began in the seventeenth century when school decisions were made at town meetings. As communities grew in size

and in population this process became cumbersome and in the late 1700's the delegation model was adopted. Delegates were elected from each ward to represent the parents and community. This model served the people so that they felt that had a say in the schooling process. The delegation model increased the efficiency of conducting school business in the community, but created a gap between families and schools. Through the years the model became institutional in the roles, relationships, and mind-sets of parents, students, and citizens while the family's role in formal education was diminished (Merz, 1986).

Not until the late 1800's did large numbers of American women, building upon prior organizational experience in social clubs, band together to discuss common parental concerns, calling themselves "mother's study" or "child study". Eventually, the small isolated groups began to join one another and in turn formed the National Congress of Mothers that is known today as the National PTA (Parent Teacher Association).

The objectives sought by these women were not ones of protest, but information sharing, childrearing, venting of frustrations, and establishing forums for self-instruction. They shared research findings on children's physical, psychological, and moral development and sought ways to convey basic knowledge on childrearing to disadvantaged women. Their most important role was to serve at local, state, and national levels as political lobbyists to insure and safeguard the special needs of women and children.

The PTA provided a networking system for mothers basing a majority of their knowledge on mother's maternal instincts and moral sensibilities partly because the sciences of child development were not well grounded empirically. The PTA program was neither dependent upon nor subservient to the mandate of science. Thus, in the early twentieth century parent education became embodied in the work of the PTA providing a forum for political activity generated by maternal interest in education (Schlossman, 1983).

The first half of the twentieth century saw parents supporting schools through parent-teacher associations and placing a tremendous amount of trust in teachers and the school system. The last half of the century has seen profound changes in families, economies, and the expectations of schools. Until this point schools were content to provide a variety of curriculum offerings and allow students and their families to choose among course offerings based on their interests and abilities. Beginning in 1965, the government mandated changes in the educational system to provide educational services for students with special needs and to provide pre-school experiences for students who were entering the school system at a disadvantage due to economic or family conditions (Epstein, 1984).

*In 1965 the Head Start model was created. Not only did this provide for at-risk children to receive exposure to school, it also incorporated a parent component that would involve parents giving them a sense of ownership in their child's learning. The Head Start

model involved parents as volunteers, paid aides, tutors and advisors.

*In 1967 the Follow Through program was created. It was designed to continue the involvement of Head Start parents in their children's education. Parents were required to form a Parent Advisory Committee, volunteer at school and have frequent contacts with the teacher.

*In the mid 70's federal legislation was enacted that provides education to handicapped children. Parents were recognized as an integral part of the process by provisions that required teachers and parents to cooperatively develop goals for these special needs children.

*Along with the Head Start model created in the mid 60's came Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This provided extra instruction in reading, writing and math to disadvantaged children. Parent conferences, home visits, and frequent parent meetings encourage parents to remain involved in their children's education.

*Amendments to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1974 and 1975 created Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) to assure that parents would participate in school and district policies supported by the federal funds of Title I that affected their children. Title I and its successor, Chapter I of the Education Consolidation and improvement Act (ECIA) continued to

recognize the importance of close cooperation between home and school (Epstein, 1984).

Though parent involvement has historically been in existence since the beginning of humankind, the extent of participation continues to be an area that concerns educators and administrators alike. The research conclusively points in the same direction. So long as parents are the basic ingredient in the improvement strategy, students will do better in school (Henderson, 1987).

Social scientists have just begun to look at the dynamics of the evolving relationship between families and schools, though little attention has been given to looking at the perspectives of parents who are trying to communicate their concerns and negotiate the complexities of the school system (Lightfoot, 1978). Parents are not helpless, voiceless victims. They are, however, systematically excluded from life inside school, and the extent of their participation reflects their social class, race and ethnicity, the teacher's perspective on parents and community, and their individual personalities (Lightfoot, 1978).

Through research has pointed to the fact that parents who are actively involved make a measurable difference in achievement, (Lazar & Darlington, 1978) few studies have addressed whether and what kinds of parent involvement works. Most studies have instead been designed to compare groups of high-risk students receiving special treatment with control groups of their peers (Henderson, 1987). Schools have a responsibility to both student and parents. If

schools treat parents as unimportant, or if they discourage parents from becoming involved, they promote the development of attitudes in the family that inhibit achievement at school (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

The relationships with parents and the school can be strengthened so that common standards develop (Coleman & Hoffer 1987). In doing so, the achievement of students increases along with a sense of community among staff and parents. To create such an environment it becomes mandatory that parents are asked what they believe to be effective parent involvement. Recent research indicates that parents must be involved in their child's formal education to improve student achievement. Along with student achievement it is also important that parents and citizens participate in the governing of public institutions. It is detrimental to both the system and the individuals in the organization to shut the parent out of their children's school experience. Parent involvement is not a quick-fix, but is fundamental to a healthy system of public education (Henderson, 1987).

To learn what parents believe to be effective parent involvement, this study sought the perception of parents and teachers regarding effective parent involvement and also what the school can do to improve effective parent involvement. The absence of research in this area indicates that though there is a strong correlation between student achievement and parent involvement, there has been a certain vagueness about the processes by which

parental behaviors are linked to education efforts; the process is often implicit and assumed rather than explicit and observed (Lightfoot, 1978).

In order for schools to be productive and comfortable environments for children, they will have to incorporate the familial and cultural skills and values learned in homes and communities. When families and schools share similar values, cultural perspectives, educational goals, and modes of expression then the transition from family education to schooling is more fluid and less conflictive for the child (Lightfoot, 1978). **Children learn and grow** in schools where parents and teachers share similar visions and collaborate on guiding children forward to significantly affect a child's formal education (Lightfoot, 1978).

The research tells us that everyone benefits when parents are involved, especially children (Henderson, 1987). Many of the studies have asked parents to answer questionnaires regarding parent involvement or asked teachers, parents, or administration what they believe parents can do within the realm of their child's education. A study done by Derek Toomey (1986) found that those parents who were involved in the school actually increased the educational quality for their children. **The fact is that teachers have a tendency** to favor parents who are willing to come to school. This in turn builds the self-confidence of the parents and the commitment to the program. **On the other hand those parents who are more comfortable** at home than coming to the school are considered the silent majority.

The school neglects those parents who are not as visible but is attentive to those who come to the school.

The research indicates that there are significant long-term benefits to several types of parent participation in the public schools. While teachers have been asked to describe effective parent involvement the parents perceptions have not been sought (Davies, 1988; Foster, 1984; Fruchter, 1984; Greenberg, 1989; Lightfoot, 1981; Rasinski, 1989; Zeldin, 1990). This lack of information regarding what parents believe to be effective parent involvement is what lead to this exploratory study.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of the related research and professional literature on effective parental involvement. The focus will be on studies which surveyed parents and teachers on parent involvement in public schools. Much has been written about types of parent involvement, improvement in achievement due to parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement. Those studies were informative and enlightening, but are not cited in this review because this study concerns itself with the perceptions of both parents and teachers on effective parent involvement in schools.

Parental involvement has been defined in a number of ways. Gordon (1978) divides parental involvement into three modes: The Parents Impact Model which describes the influence parents and home environment have on a child's learning pattern; the School Impact Model which is direct parent involvement in the school such as volunteering and serving on boards; and the Community Impact Model which includes parental involvement in a variety of ways from teacher at home to active member of the local community. Herman and Yeh (1980) divided parent involvement into five categories: school-home communication, parent awareness of school operations, parent influence, parent participation in school functions and activities, and teacher parent relations. Gordon and Breivogel

(1976) defined it as involvement derived from collaboration between home and school. Collaboration must be based on one central ingredient: parents must have access to and share in the decision-making process of the school. Tangri and Moles (1987) described three dimensions of parental involvement: providing service to schools through paid volunteer positions, home-school relationships which includes parent teacher communication and education and training provided by schools.

Although parent involvement is a key component in a child's success in school, a clear cut definition of parent involvement fails to exist. The role of parents in the education process generally follows traditional patterns. The manner that parents involve themselves revolves mainly around those areas that educators have specified. There is a small percentage of parents who do go beyond the norm and become more broadly involved. The majority have not been involved at all or at a minimum for a variety of reasons. **As a result,** parent involvement continues to be an area that both parents and teachers need to study and evaluate.

Parental Involvement: The Parents' Perspective

There are a variety of ways that parents can be involved in the education of their children. Chavkin and Williams (1985) studied perceptions of effective parent involvement based on surveys administered to key stakeholders: parents, elementary teachers, elementary principals, and education personnel. The instrument used with parents was called the Parent Involvement Questionnaire.

It consisted of one hundred closed response items and was divided into seven sections. The survey was given to over 3,000 parents and included four large-sized city school districts. The researchers found levels of strong agreement among all the groups surveyed on statements related to certain aspects of parent involvement. These were: teachers should give me ideas about helping my children with homework; I should make sure that my children do their homework; and I cooperate with my children's teacher. Lower levels of agreement among stakeholders were found with these statements: teachers have enough to do without also having to work with parents; and I have little to do with my children's success in school. The aspect upon which stakeholders were most likely to disagree was having the school district provide guidelines for parent involvement.

In another study conducted by Herman and Yeh (1980) a closed response questionnaire was given to parents of second and third grade students. The instrument asked parents to rate parent involvement practices on a scale of 1 to 5. The researchers found a significant relationship between parent participation in school activities and student achievement.

Epstein in 1986 studied parent reactions to teacher practices of parent involvement. The parents were given a survey asking about their child's teacher and techniques used to involve parents in the learning process. She learned that some teachers involve parents more than others, a few parents are active at school but most are not.

and parents who are active at school influence the use of learning activities at home.

In 1986 Epstein attempted to understand parent perspectives of teachers who emphasize either cooperation between or separation of schools and families. A survey was presented to 1,269 parents of first, third and fifth grade students. It asked questions regarding the parent involvement of the child's teacher. The survey contained items that assessed parents' attitudes toward the school and teachers, their experiences with different kinds of involvement and communications with the school, and their reactions to the teacher's programs and practices.

The attitude of the parents was generally positive towards their child's school. Despite positive attitudes, parents did report that teachers could do more to involve parents in learning activities at home. About 58% of the parents rarely or never received requests from the teacher to become involved in learning activities at home. Over 80% of the parents said they could spend more time helping their children at home if they were shown how to do specific learning activities.

One of the important areas that was discussed was parent involvement in the school. Actual participation by parents was limited to a small percentage of parents. Approximately 70% of the parents had never helped in the classroom, with trips or fund raising for the school. About 88% never assisted in the library, cafeteria, or other school areas.

For purposes of this study, it must be noted that the above mentioned surveys and questionnaires were generated by education professionals and consisted of closed response items. No open-ended surveys of parent perceptions were found in reviewing the literature.

Parent Involvement: The Teachers' Perspective

Teachers attempt to meet the needs of all students in a variety of ways. One way that has been used by some teachers is to ask parents to work with their children on learning activities. Becker and Epstein (1982) conducted a formal survey of 3,700 teachers regarding teachers' perceptions about parent-involvement strategies and how they practice them. The survey focused on 14 specific techniques that teachers may employ to encourage parent participation in learning activities with their children. Teachers felt that communication and contact were important parts of parental involvement. Ninety-five percent of the teachers reported that they talk, send notes home, and interact with parents on open-school nights. Having parents check and sign homework was also considered a high priority with teachers. Though these are considered standard practices of bridging the information gap, the manner in which teachers approach the task varies considerably.

Researchers found a wide variety in responses when they asked teachers if, when, and how they ask parents to help with school work at home. Sixty-five percent reported that they do discuss with each parent what they can do to help at home.

However, 35% stated that they did so only when the need arose. Only a minority of teachers initiate interactions with parents that go beyond what is traditionally expected of them. Generally 80% of the teachers stated that they conduct more than three conferences a year but only 7% initiate three or more group meetings or workshops for parents apart from school sponsored parent's night.

Related findings from Becker's research are that most teachers felt that parent involvement is an important factor in solving problems faced by the schools and that parent involvement in the classroom is useful for increasing parent learning assistance at home. Teacher's opinions were divided when asked if they thought teachers can actually influence parents to help their children at home. Although three quarters of the teachers agreed that parental involvement was important, half of the teachers had doubts about the success of practical efforts to involve parents in learning activities at home.

A study by, Epstein and Becker (1982) found three perceptions on parent-school relations:

1. parents care but cannot do much to help the school or their children in actual learning;
2. parents care but should not help with school learning;
3. parents care and can be of great help if they are shown how to help.

A study conducted by Epstein and Dauber (1989) compared parent involvement practices and programs at elementary and

middle school levels. A questionnaire was prepared with the assistance of Teacher Representatives for Parent Involvement. Data was collected from 171 teachers in five elementary and three middle schools. The purpose of the survey was to learn more about teacher's attitudes and parent involvement and practices in elementary and middle schools in inner-city settings. The questions asked of teachers solicited attitudes toward parental involvement, practices of communication, and uses of school and classroom volunteers. Also included were open-ended comments about parent involvement practices and problems.

The data from the teachers in the eight schools were combined to study the general patterns and connections of parental involvement between teacher attitudes, school programs, and actual practices used at different academic levels. Overall there was strong agreement and little variation in teachers' attitudes toward parent involvement in inner-city schools. Those teachers who have a more positive attitude toward parent involvement are teachers who teach in self-contained classrooms and those teachers who believe that they have high support from colleagues and parents. The teachers who have a more positive attitude toward parent involvement have characteristics that include parent conferences with all students and parents, strong communication about school programs, and providing parents both good and bad reports about student progress. Through their strong belief in parent involvement those teachers are successful in involving hard to reach parents, working parents, less

educated parents, single parents, parents of older students, young parents, parents new to the school, and other adults with whom children live.

Teachers in elementary schools report significantly stronger parent programs than teachers in middle schools. The study also found that teachers who had a strong program in communication, volunteering, or learning activities at home emphasized the importance of that program. Additionally, teachers who taught different subjects emphasized different types of parental involvement. Teachers of English and Language involved parents and expected their involvement to promote the child's success in this area. Math, science, and social studies teachers expected much less from parents. Some teachers believed that the parent could not provide the support necessary for the subject area. The study also looked at teacher experience in relation to the type of parental involvement. The researchers found no correlation to the teacher's level of education, years of teaching experience or the percentage of students below average ability. Volunteers in the classroom were used by newer teachers and elementary grade teachers. Learning activities at home were used more by elementary teachers than middle school teachers. Teachers who believe that parents are not interested in becoming involved in their children's schooling made fewer efforts to contact, inform and work with parents, especially those parents who are hard to reach. Teachers wish to see themselves in line with their colleagues regarding parent

involvement rather than believe that they are different from others at the school. This report points to the fact that until teachers and parents explore and find out what both believe to be effective parent involvement, the gap will continue to grow.

Out of the Becker and Epstein research (1982) came the suggestion that new research on parent involvement should take into account the natural variations in classrooms. **The importance of** knowing how to organize parent involvement so the activities will become as familiar as traditional parent-teacher events. Expected benefits of effective parent involvement would be: better basic skills, greater retention of skills over holidays, better behavior, enrichment areas the teacher need not direct, and improved parental self-image.

SUMMARY

Though the studies cited have surveyed both teachers and parents there continues to be a gap between their perceptions of effective parent involvement. The surveys were generated by educators and reflected their traditional beliefs about parent involvement. Family structures are changing from the traditional two parent family to include single parents and families where the parent(s) work full-time. Henderson (1988) stated that children whose parents are involved with the school in some manner score higher than children of similar aptitude and family backgrounds whose parents are not involved. Williams (1984) found that there was strong agreement that parental involvement is important and vital to a child's success in school and that parents and teachers

should communicate and cooperate more frequently. He also found that parents and educators disagree about the value of different parental roles. Williams also found that principals and teachers favor more parent involvement in traditional ways such as attending class plays or holding bake sales. Henderson (1988) states that parental involvement, though an important factor is not as important as the fact that the involvement is reasonably well planned, comprehensive, and long lasting.

The information in this section points out that parental involvement does relate directly to student achievement. The question still is not clear though on what it is that parents and teachers believe to be effective parent involvement. The studies that have look at perceptions of parents and teachers were closed-end questionnaires that were designed by educators. If the gap is ever to be narrowed we must begin to evaluate what parents believe to be effective parent involvement compared to what teachers believe to be effective parent involvement.

Chapter III

METHOD

The review of literature echoed Lightfoot's findings in 1978, that research regarding parents' view of effective parent involvement is limited. Though there is a strong correlation between student achievement and parent involvement, there has been a certain vagueness about the process by which parental behaviors are linked to education efforts; the process is often implicit and assumed rather than explicit and observed. For this reason, responses from parents were sought and compared with those of teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study comparing parents and teachers' perceptions of parent involvement.

1. What do parents perceive as effective parent involvement?
2. What do teachers perceive as effective parent involvement?
3. How are teachers and parents' perceptions of effective parent involvement similar and different?
4. What are parents' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement?

5. What are the teachers' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement?

6. How are teachers and parents' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement similar and different?

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study was designed to provide base line data for future studies of parent involvement. An open ended questionnaire was developed to gather information on the six research questions. It was then field tested on six individuals--three parents and three teachers. The field test indicated that the instrument was too lengthy and too complicated. The questions were revised, eliminating those which did not directly relate to parent involvement. The survey was then returned to the six individuals to determine if the revisions made the instrument suitable for the purposes of this study. They indicated that the simplified version was more readable and believed it would be an effective way to learn the perceptions of parents and teachers. The final version of the survey was composed of two open ended questions and is included in appendix A.

The Parent Involvement Survey was administered to parents during spring conferences in March of 1991. As parents entered the school they were asked to complete the survey and return it before leaving the building. In a number of cases, parents wished to

express their opinions verbally. In order to gain insight of parents, the author of this study recorded their verbatim responses on a survey sheet. Upon completion, each survey was placed in an envelope so that responses could be kept confidential. As an incentive to complete the survey parents were given a small bag of candy to share with their child and the chance to win a lottery ticket. One hundred seventeen surveys were received from parents.

During the same week all teachers were also asked to complete the survey. Parent and staff surveys were printed on different colored paper so that responses could be differentiated at the time of analysis. Sixteen of the thirty-six staff members responded to the instrument. This rate of responses from the faculty was attributed to teachers being inundated with paper work during parent-teacher conferences and the lack of an incentive for completing the survey.

After surveys were collected each response was recorded verbatim on individual note cards. The individual responses of both parents and teachers were then content-analyzed for each survey question. The note cards were sorted by the researcher looking for trends that would lead to common categories. A preliminary label was then assigned to each group of statement cards. The researcher reevaluated each set of cards looking at the individual statements to determine if they fit within a category. After reevaluating the statement cards several times, they were further subdivided according to common themes until each statement had been properly assigned within a category. A frequency count was completed for

each category. The total number of surveys completed was then divided by the number of statements in each category to provide percentages for categories and sub-categories.

A team of experts was asked to validate the researcher's categorization of the responses by teachers and parents. The team included a female elementary principal, a male elementary principal, and a university professor who brought an analytical perspective to the team. After the three experts reviewed the categories, some revisions were made.

SAMPLE POPULATION

The elementary school serves approximately 420 students and 290 families in the mid-city area of a midwestern city. Minority enrollment at the time the study was conducted was 40.8 percent and 94.6 percent of the students qualified for free or reduced price lunches. Composite scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for 1990-91 averaged at the 15th percentile for second graders and the 10th percentile for fourth graders. This school has a comprehensive set of programs to meet the needs of a diverse population. This includes Head Start, preschool, and special education classes for behavior disorder and mentally disabled students. There are a total of 36 certified staff for preschool through fifth grades including self-contained and special education classes. The mobility rate during the 1990-91 school year was 144% as computed by the evaluation department of the school district.

POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS

This study was exploratory in nature and for that reason it cannot be generalized to a broader population. The goal for this study was to generate researched hypotheses for future work in the area of parent involvement.

Some of the possible limitations include:

1. The population sampled included only those individuals who came for conferences; 200 surveys were handed out to parents and 117 were returned;
2. Sixteen of the 36 staff members at the school completed and returned the survey, a percentage of 44%;
3. The parents who responded to the survey could choose to respond in writing or they could dictate their answers to a recorder--their responses may have been slightly distorted by the recorder, though the recorder read the written response to the parent to ensure that the recorded responses were correctly heard;
4. The parents' responses might have been biased depending on if they completed the survey before or after their conference or if their conference had had a positive or negative tone;
5. The process of analyzing and categorizing responses involved making judgments by the researcher and quantifying the results,
6. The research questions were general and a wide range of responses was obtained.

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The perceptions of both parents and teachers regarding effective parent involvement were obtained by using an open-ended survey. This provided the opportunity for the researcher to obtain unprompted, spontaneous responses. This was viewed as most desirable from the researcher's stand-point because, as the review of literature points out, most instruments to this date have been educator-designed and contain subtle biases in the choices offered to respondents.

Parents and teachers responded to the following two survey questions:

Questions 1. How would you define effective parent involvement in the school?

Question 2. What could a school do to encourage effective parent involvement?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Six research questions are answered by the data provided from the survey.

1. What do parents perceive as effective parent involvement?
2. What do teachers perceive as effective parent involvement?

3. How are teachers and parents' perceptions of effective parent involvement similar and different?

4. What are parents' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement?

5. What are the teachers' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement?

6. How are the teachers' and parents' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement similar and different? The responses as categorized are reported in the following sections.

Research Question 1

What do parents perceive as effective parent involvement? Parents responses fell into five main categories.

- A. Parents showing interest in child's progress
- B. Parent involvement in school functions
- C. Communication between parent and teacher
- D. Parent involvement by volunteering
- E. Other types of parent involvement

A. Parents showing interest in child's progress

Fifty-five percent of the parents believed that effective parent involvement required home involvement and interest. "Get involved in plans to help with children's needs, academics or behavior," stated one parent. Approximately 46% of the parents mentioned activities related to parents being aware of what their child is involved in at school and showing interest. A small percentage of parents (nine

percent) believed effective parent involvement was helping their children with their homework.

B. Parent involvement in school functions

A large percentage of the parents, 53%, felt that attending school functions defined effective parent involvement. They included such things as attending PTA, conferences, open house, programs, musical and class outings in their definition.

C. Communications between parent and teacher

Forty-one percent of the parents indicated that effective parent involvement required communication and teamwork between parent and teacher. "Parents interacting with teachers to find out what each can do as it relates to a student's education," stated one parent. The parents referred to teamwork as, "teachers contacting parents when there is a problem, making contact within the first three weeks of school, parents notifying teachers of changes at home that may affect the child's performance, and having rapport and good communication with the teacher."

D. Parent involvement by volunteering

Thirty-eight percent of the parents named volunteering in their definition of parent involvement. Of the thirty-eight percent, 13% of the parents described volunteering as being in their child's

classroom. "It helps the parent be aware of what is being studied by my child," stated one parent. The other 25% defined volunteering as helping with field trips, fund raisers, tutoring and special events. One parent described volunteering as, "giving some of your time to the school and sharing in extra curriculum activities with your child."

E. Other types of parent involvement

Fourteen percent of the parents named other ways of being involved in the school. They listed in their definitions supporting with dollars, awareness of issues, curriculum, climate, and decision making. "Know your rights as parents. Don't always accept educators as final say if you're not comfortable," stated one parent. One out of four parents stated that effective parent involvement was "directly supporting the teachers and administration."

Four parents described effective parent involvement as helping other parents get involved and understanding the importance of being involved. Three percent of the parents gave reasons for not getting involved. Transportation, and work conflicts were the main concerns.

Research Question 2

What do teachers perceive as effective parent involvement?

Teachers' responses fell into four main categories.

- A. Parents showing interest in child's progress
- B. Parent involvement in school functions
- C. Communication between parents and school
- D. Parent involvement by volunteering

A. Parent showing interest in child's progress

All the teachers indicated that effective parent involvement requires active participation by and interest of parents in their child's progress. "Sometimes the best parent involvement is helping their child at home," stated one teacher. Eighty-seven percent of teachers mentioned activities related to parents motivating, disciplining, setting limits, offering guidelines and showing interest in the child's school work. Also, one in four teachers said that parents should be involved in their children's homework.

B. Parent involvement in school functions

One hundred percent of the teachers felt that parents attending school functions contributed to effective parent involvement. School functions such as PTA conferences, fun night and other school sponsored activities were mentioned.

C. Communication between parents and school

Fifty-six percent of the teachers believed that effective parent involvement required communication and teamwork between the teacher and parent. As stated by one teacher, "systems that encourage regularly scheduled communication time will assist in keeping parents involved in their child's progress." Other suggestions included communication through phone calls, personal visits and notes.

D. Parent involvement by volunteering

Fifty percent of the teachers felt that parents volunteering was a part of effective parent involvement. This included classroom volunteering, chaperoning field trips, sharing special interests or talents and volunteering to help with clubs sponsored by the school.

Research question 3

How are teachers and parents perceptions of effective parent involvement similar and different?

Both groups named four qualities in their definition of effective parent involvement: 1. parents showing interest in child's progress. 2. involvement in school functions, 3. effective communication and 4. school volunteering. Table 1 illustrates differences in percentages

Table 1

	Parents		Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
Parents Showing Interest In Child's Progress	64	55.0 %	16	100.0 %
Supporting child/interest in child	53	46.0%	12	75.0%
Homework	11	9.0%	2	12.5%
Both			2	12.5%

Parent Involvement in School Functions	61	53.0 %	16	100.0 %
PTA	22	19.0%	6	38.0%
Conferences	21	18.0%	5	31.0%
Other	18	16.0%	3	18.0%
Multiple answer			2	13.0%

Com/ Teamwork between Parents and Teachers	48	41.0 %	9	56.0 %
---	-----------	---------------	----------	---------------

Parent Involvement by Volunteering	44	38.0 %	8	50.0 %
Classroom	15	13.0%	4	25.0%
Other	29	25.0%	4	25.0%

Table 1 Continued

	Parents		Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
Other types of parent involvement	16	14.0 %		
Involved in school decision making	7	6.0%		
Support school administration	4	3.5%		
Support other parents	4	3.5%		
Dollars/contributions	1	1.0%		
Reasons for not getting involved	4	3.5 %		
Transportation	1	1.0%		
Work	3	2.5%		
Not Usable/Not appropriate	7	6.0 %	3	19.0 %
No Comment	5	4.0%		
Inappropriate	2	2.0%		
Total Responses	117	100.0 %	16	100.0 %

when comparing the responses of parents to those of teachers. The first two items have the largest discrepancy between parents and teachers. While roughly half of the parents felt parents showing interest in child's progress was included in a definition of effective parent involvement, all the teachers included it in theirs. A similar difference is noted on the second item, involvement in school functions. Fifty-three percent of the parents included it in their definition, while 100% of the teachers did. A difference is also noted when comparing how many parents and teachers used "effective communication" in their definition of effective parental involvement. Forty-one percent of parents mentioned communication in their definition while fifty-six percent of the teachers included communication in theirs. In examining the difference in perception related to school volunteering, it is interesting that a relatively small percentage (thirty-eight percent) of parents listed volunteering in their definition of effective parental involvement, whereas fifty percent of the teachers named volunteering. Parents also listed other types of parent involvement: being involved in school decision making, supporting administration, supporting other parents and financial support. Teachers on the other hand made no comment regarding these areas. Parents also listed reasons for not getting involved which were transportation and work while teachers did not list any

Research question 4

What are parents' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement?

Parents responses fell into six main categories.

- A. Communication
- B. Parent/child activities
- C. Parent education and support
- D. School volunteers
- E. Mandatory parental involvement
- F. Encouragement from children

A. Communication

One hundred percent of the parents felt that the school could encourage effective parent involvement by increasing communication. Forty percent of the parents made comments about the importance of communication between school and families. "Be very specific about academic or behavioral need and provide clear solutions that are possible for parents to understand and participate in," stated one parent. The parents made specific suggestions that they believed would encourage parent involvement. Comments were, "Provide opportunity to be a decision maker, to have clear communication from school on a scheduled basis, teachers need to give support to parents and the community, recognize parents who

participate at the school." Five percent of the parents felt the school needs to provide positive, open climate." Three percent of the parents felt that schools could use home visits to inform parents who do not attend conferences and also to help make them aware of the importance of school. Twelve percent of the parents felt that schools should encourage more phone communication. Phone calls would be not only to share positive and negative but also an opportunity to share helpful ideas, and serve as a reminder for meetings. One parent shared, "calling parents about PTA meetings gives a feeling of belonging to the process of education." Six percent of the parents felt that schools should provide for parents that need flexible scheduling for meetings and conferences to accommodate work schedules and family needs. Fourteen percent of the parents believed that to encourage effective parent involvement there must be a strong working relationship with their child's teacher. They suggested such things as teachers talking to parents more, treating each other as equals and having more informal meetings. "Staff and teachers should be aware that parents have assets and skills to offer" stated one parent. Twenty-one percent of the parents believed that one way for schools to encourage effective parent involvement is to increase written communication. This would be done through weekly newsletters asking parents for their support and assistance, describing what the child is doing and how they can help, also changes in their child's performance.

B. Parent child activities

Twenty percent of the parents felt that schools could encourage effective parent involvement by providing parent/child activities. Some activities mentioned were lunch with child, after school programs, potluck suppers, and banquets to recognize students.

C. Parent education and support

Seven percent of the parents believed that schools could encourage effective parent involvement by providing parent education and support. This would be through activities such as parent training, presentations by teachers regarding school expectations, and support during the meeting by providing baby-sitting for children.

D. School volunteers

Six percent of the parents felt that the school could encourage school volunteers. This would be done through asking parent to participate in classroom activities, special reward assemblies, and field trips. One parent stated "pick a parent every month to participate with their child in their class."

E. Mandatory parental involvement

Nine percent of the parents felt that school should encourage effective parent involvement with reminders from teachers or other parents who would communicate the need. Some parents felt that involvement should be mandatory.

F. Encouragement from children

Two percent of the parents stated that schools should have students encourage parents and let them know what the need is. One parent stated, "have a class to tell parents what help is needed and how they can help." Three percent of the parents made the comment that they did not really know how to answer effectively or just stated that didn't know or were not sure. Five percent of the parents believed that the school was doing a fine job. One parent believed that communication was better than years before.

Research question 5

What are the teachers' perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement?

Teachers' responses fell into five main categories.

- A. Communication
- B. Parent education and support
- C. Parent/child activities

- D. School volunteers
- E. Flexible scheduling

A. Communication

All the teachers felt the schools could improve in communication between home and school. "Let parents know how important they are and be positive if they are involved in their child's classroom," stated one teacher. **Ninety-four percent of the teachers mentioned the importance of the teacher and school staying in contact with the parent. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers believed that the school must provide a climate that is open and conducive to making parents feel welcome. This includes positive statements showing appreciation for whatever level of involvement is demonstrated, and making parents feel comfortable by being approachable and understanding.**

B. Parent education and support

Sixty-three percent of the teachers felt that the school needs to provide parent education and support to encourage effective parent involvement. **The areas mentioned most often included training in behavior expectations, how to help with homework, parent support with other parents, and mandatory meetings.**

C. Parent/child activities

Thirty-one percent of the teachers felt that the school should provide parent/child activities to encourage effective involvement. "Activities which focus on students, parents, and staff should be made routine so the child can see the unity of parents/teachers" stated one teacher. Most of the activities mentioned by teachers were parent/child opportunities.

D. School volunteers

Thirty-one percent of the teachers felt that the school should encourage parents to be actively involved in their children's classroom as volunteers. One teacher stated "provide a diversity of involvement options to involve the parents in activities that would connect them with their child's classroom."

E. Flexible scheduling

One teacher stated that opportunity should be given to teachers to have flexible scheduling for time spent after school.

Research question 6

How are the teachers and parents perceptions of what the school can do to improve parental involvement similar and different?

Both groups identified four areas for encouraging parent involvement: 1. Communication, 2. parent/child activities, 3. scheduling and 4. school volunteers. The parent group named two additional areas: mandatory parental involvement and encouragement from children. Further, the teacher group suggested providing parent education. Table 2 illustrates differences in percentages between parents and teachers. A notable difference was observed between parents and teachers in defining communication. Teacher's descriptions of communication were for the most part limited to sending home information of upcoming events and reminders whereas parents specifically listed six areas four of which were more specific than teachers had listed.

Both parents and teachers mentioned parent/child activities as a way the school could improve parent involvement. The type of activities mentioned by parents and teachers were somewhat different. Parents mentioned such things as potlucks and banquets whereas teachers stated they wanted activities that offered opportunity for the parent and child to participate together. This would help strengthen the unity between home and school.

Parents and teacher discussed scheduling concerns to encourage parent involvement. Parents stated that schools should provide opportunities for parents who have unusual schedules because of work or other circumstances. Teachers on the other hand wanted to have flexibility in scheduling so they could plan and participate in parent activities that extend beyond their contract day.

Table 2

	Parents		Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
COMMUNICATION	117	100.0 %	16	100.0 %
Ongoing & Active Between School/Families	47	40.0%	1	6.0%
Open Positive climate	5	4.0%		
Both A & B			15	94.0%
Home visits	4	3.0%		
Phone	14	12.0%		
Flexible scheduling for parents	7	6.0%		
Teamwork between teacher/parents	16	14.0%		
Written communication	24	21.0%		
PARENT/ CHILD ACTIVITIES	23	20.0 %	5	31.0 %
PARENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT			10	63.0 %
SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS	7	6.0 %	5	31.0 %
MANDATORY PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	11	9.5 %	3	19.0 %
ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CHILDREN	3	2.5 %		
FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING			1	6.0 %

TABLE 2 Continued

	Parents		Teachers	
	N	%	N	%
NO COMMENT	4	3.0 %		
DOING A FINE JOB	6	5.0 %		
TOTAL RESPONSES	117	100.0 %	16	100.0 %

Though both parents and teachers commented about the need for parent volunteers, parents clearly stated that teachers should initiate the opportunity for parents to visit or volunteer. On the other hand teachers wrote that parents should take more initiative to volunteer within classrooms or in other school related activities.

Several parents mentioned two areas in which schools could improve parent involvement: making parent involvement mandatory and having the children encourage their parents to become involved. Teachers on the other hand named one area that was not mentioned by parents. Sixty-three percent of the teachers stated that parent education should be provided to encourage effective parent involvement. **This would include training to work with their children** on academics and discipline. Teachers commented that the school should provide support services to those parents who need child care and flexible hours.

The data presented in this chapter is supported by anecdotes and personal quotations. It is an accurate reflection of the responses to the survey. Most of the responses received were written, but many were dictated and later transcribed. If it appears that the anecdotes were in incomplete sentences or were somewhat unrelated to the question, please keep in mind that these were the actual thoughts the respondents chose to share.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was two-fold: to learn if parents and teachers have different perceptions of the ways parents can effectively be involved in their children's education and to learn what parents and teachers would suggest to improve parent involvement in the school.

Finding 1: Parents defined effective parent involvement in differing ways. There was no response that was mentioned by all parents.

Parent's responses to the open-ended survey show that parents view parent involvement mainly as showing an interest in the child's progress and being involved in school functions. **These two forms of involvement were identified by 55% and 53% respectively.** Parents defined "showing an interest in the child" as taking an active role in knowing the child's progress for both academics and behavior. Participation in school functions was defined by attending after school activities or other related school programs. **In a 1986 study Epstein found that 70% of the parents had never helped in the classroom, on field trips, or fundraising. This is similar to the responses received by the parents surveyed regarding volunteering.**

Only thirty-eight percent of the parents defined effective involvement as volunteering. Communication was named by forty-five percent of the parents in their definition of effective involvement. The percentage of responses raises some questions.

1. Are parents aware of the many different ways to be involved? (As parents seem to focus in on one issue.)
2. Do only half of the parents think that they need to show an interest in their child's progress?
3. Do parents think that if they show interest in their child's progress they don't need to attend school functions?
4. If parents define parent involvement as attending school functions, do they not feel a need to show interest in the child's progress?

Parents' responses indicate that they see themselves more as a support to their children's teacher versus taking a proactive stance in which parents are active in decision making and policy formulation.

Helping with homework, attending school functions and volunteering, are dramatically different from serving on the school board, site based council, or parent advisor committee, which are also appropriate forms of parental involvement. The parents at this school view themselves as a support to the teacher rather than seeing teachers as helping them educate their children.

In summary, this finding may be specific to the school in which the survey was conducted. In this particular school, this awareness of differing parent perceptions could lead to parent activities that would allow parents to share and perhaps change perceptions. If parents are unaware of appropriate ways to be involved in their child's education they are unlikely to act in appropriate ways.

Finding 2: All the teachers surveyed stated that parents showing an interest their child and attending school functions defined effective parent involvement. Many teachers included communication in their definition and a few included volunteering.

Teachers' responses to the open-ended survey show that teachers view effective involvement as showing an interest in the child's progress and being involved in school functions. These two forms of involvement were listed by 100% of the teachers. The findings show that all the teachers expect parents to take an interest in their child's progress and help with homework. In terms of teachers' expectations with parent interest, the 1982 study by Becker and Epstein found that half of the teachers had doubts about the success of practical efforts to involve parents in activities at home. Communication was named by 56% of the teachers and 37% Of the teachers stated that parents should initiate the communication while only 6% of the teachers stated it was their responsibility to initiate communication. The final area that teachers identified was volunteering. Only half of the teachers named volunteering in their

definition of effective parental involvement. Combining these pieces of information raises questions.

1. If teachers think they are unlikely to get successful parent involvement in the home are they going to solicit it?
2. If parents are not asked to show interest in their child's progress through homework activities will they do so independently?
3. Do teachers assume that parents know what to do at home to help their child?
4. Are teachers waiting for parents to initiate communication?
5. Are parent volunteers in the classroom not as welcome by teachers as is sometimes assumed?

In summary, this finding indicates that teachers see the role of the parent not only as vital, but also requires them to be involved in all aspects of their child's program. To make this happen, teachers must share part of the responsibility by letting parents know and understand what they expect of them to help their child be successful.

Finding 3: Parents and teachers listed many of the same qualities in defining effective parent involvement but differed in the frequency of responses.

Parents and teachers both listed showing an interest in the child, attending school functions, communication, and volunteering in their definition of effective parent involvement. The percentages differed in that parents stated attending school functions and showing interest in the child only half of the time while teachers listed both areas 100% of the time. These notable differences in responses indicate that the parents and teachers have different perceptions of effective parent involvement.

A conclusion should not be drawn that the parents who did not list "showing interest in child's program" or "attending school functions do not believe it was necessary. In a study done by Epstein (1986) over 80% of the parents said they could spend more time helping their children at home if they were shown how to do specific learning activities. Parents may not be aware of the different ways they could be involved. The same study also found that 70% of the parents had never helped in the classroom with trips, or fundraising for the school. Additionally, parents and teachers listed communication and volunteering in defining effective parental involvement although neither was the main focus by either group. A comparison of the frequency of responses from both parents and teachers raises some questions.

1. Do teachers clearly communicate that they believe parents need to be involved in all areas in order to be a supportive and effective parent?

2. Do teachers communicate to parents the different ways to be involved.

In summary, if teachers expect parents to be involved in all aspects of their child's education, while parents see a more limited role for themselves, then more dialog may be needed to come to a clearer understanding of what teachers want from parents and what parents view as being effective. By allowing parents and teachers to clearly map out what they each view as important then a better understanding can occur of what is vital for the child to be successful.

Finding 4: Parents think it is the school's responsibility to improve parental involvement.

Parents responses to the open-ended survey show that parents think that parent involvement could be improved with better communication. This was listed by 94% of the parents. This finding is in agreement with Epstein (1986) who found that parents could be more involved with the school if they received requests and were given information. In the area of communication, parents listed many ways that both the teacher and school could improve parental involvement. The largest percentage, 40%, is in the area of on-going and active communication between school and family. The fact that this area was listed with such frequency is a strong indicator that the school may need to evaluate how they are disseminating information to parents and consider improvements. Parent-child activities were

listed by 20% of the parents. A study by Herman and Yeh (1980) found that there was a significant relationship between parent participation in school activities and student achievement.

Two strategies mentioned by parents but not named by teachers were mandatory parental involvement and encouragement from children. Though these were named by 9% and 7% respectively, a small percentage, they could be explored to determine their relevance to parent involvement. The percentage of parent responses regarding what the school could do to improve parental involvement raises some questions.

1. Do parents view the school as being totally responsible for the communication between home and school?

2. Do parents not understand the value of parent-child activities sponsored by the school and the impact those shared experiences can have on their child?

In summary, this finding indicates that parents view the school as responsible for many factors that would contribute to effective parental involvement. Their view of the school is that it is responsible to provide strong communication between home and school. The school may need to evaluate how information is shared and insure that teachers understand the responsibility of initiating clear and frequent communication between home and school. The importance of parent involvement in school activities and the relationship to student achievement is also an area that may need to

be explored further to help parents better understand the impact it can have on their child's achievement.

Finding 5: Teachers think that the school needs to communicate effectively with parents and parents need to participate in school sponsored activities.

Communication was named by 100% of the teachers when asked what they thought the school could do to encourage parental involvement. Teachers also identified parent education, 63%, parent/child activities, 31% and school volunteers, 31%.

The sizable amount of teachers, 63%, who felt that parent education could improve parent involvement is related to the study done by Becker and Epstein. They found that only 7% of the teachers initiate three or more group meetings or workshops for parents apart from school sponsored parent's night. This raises the question. Do teachers see parent meetings as an opportunity for parent education or do teachers think that parents need to be better educated and do they use this belief to build barriers between parents and themselves?

Parent-child activities and school volunteers were also listed as suggestions for improving parental involvement. The frequency of response was not as large as might be expected since these two areas are considered the traditional way that schools involved parents. A study done by Epstein (1986) found that 70% of the parents had never helped in the classroom, field trips, etc. When evaluating the

responses made by teachers in the area of volunteering it was found that teachers felt parents should take more initiative to volunteer either in the classroom or in other related activities. The above percentages raise some questions.

1. Are administration and teachers clearly communicating to parents how they can be involved in the school and the classroom?

2. Do teachers not see a need for themselves to be trained in parent education and ways they could encourage parent involvement?

In summary, teachers thought that communication was the most important factor in improving parental involvement. They also believed that parent education is an important component in improving involvement. The teachers and administration may need to look at ways to improve the communication process so that both teachers and parents feel that it is more effective in obtaining parental involvement. The school also may need to train their teachers in effective communication that would involve parents in the school.

Finding 6: Parents and teachers both view communication as the most important factor in improving effective parent involvement.

Parents and teachers named communication with the highest frequency, 94% and 100% respectively. The fact that teachers and

parents listed communication with such frequency is an indication that both parents and teachers feel strongly that the school should provide communication that makes parents feel a stronger connection between school and home. This, they believe would improve effective parental involvement. The parents and teachers also mentioned parent/child activities. Parent/child activities are provided to connect the school and parent in a form that is different from providing learning activities at home. In a study by Herman and Yeh (1980) it was found that there was a significant relationship between parent participation in school activities and student achievement. Parents and teachers both felt that the school should offer activities that would help improve effective parental involvement. The response from parents and teachers lead to some questions.

1. Do parents feel that the school should initiate most of the communication between school and home?
2. Do teachers have a clear understanding of the role they play in providing clear communication between the school and home?
3. Does the school need to communicate the importance of parent-child activities to parents for them to be most effective?

In summary, responses from both parents and teachers listed the same suggestions for improving effective parent involvement.

The school may need to determine how services are being delivered to parents and if teachers grasp the important role they play in delivering information to parents so that the parents feel the school is trying to involve them in an effective manner. **Since** communication is the number one priority for both parents and teachers, the value of the communication process should become the number one priority to help parents and teachers understand the significance of their roles in effective parent involvement.

The findings of the unprompted, open-ended survey provided insight that would be difficult to obtain with a close-ended educator generated survey. **This survey was not developed to look for specific** outcomes instead it sought to glean a better understanding of parents and teachers' perceptions of effective parent involvement. Though there are similarities with those previously conducted by educators, this survey allowed for exploration of perceptions. It also yielded information regarding who felt responsible to initiate the parent involvement activities.

Parent involvement is a vital and necessary component to any school program. This exploratory study has provided the insight that the perceptions of both parents and teachers are not easily predictable nor can they be summarized in two or three statements. Both parents and teachers shared strong views about what they **believe to be effective.** Effective parental involvement is complex, requiring the school to evaluate what works and what does not to best meet the needs of the family.

This open-ended survey has provided the school with a base of information in understanding the differences and similarities of the perceptions of both parents and teachers. Future studies could be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of strengthening the areas mentioned by parents and teachers. The points and questions made about each of the findings could be evaluated and expanded upon to note differences compared to the first open-ended survey. The survey could also help build a basic parent survey to evaluate how the school is providing for parents and their involvement. The survey could provide topics for staff in-service to help staff better understand parental involvement from both parent and teacher perspectives.

Recommendations

To determine if the results obtained from this exploratory study are transferable, a repeat of the open-ended survey should be conducted. For example rural, suburban, those schools that have an active parent involvement component, and a school similar to the one the study was originally obtained from, could be surveyed and responses from those schools could be compared. Commonalities and differences could be studied in relation to the demographics of the schools and generalizations could be developed. Also, the results from this study could be used as a first step in developing a valid and reliable survey of parental involvement.

Parent involvement could become more meaningful if the teachers and parents better understood what each believe to be effective. Parent involvement may have to become more individualized. Putting all parents together and assuming that as educators we are best meeting their needs may not only be ineffective but lacking in sincerity. An approach that evaluates the type of involvement appropriate to each family may be a more meaningful way to involve parents. By addressing each parent individually we move from the traditional to a new paradigm that allows the teachers to know exactly what the parent will be responsible for and the parents will know what the teachers would be responsible for, involving them in a way that makes sense for the parent, child, and teacher.

REFERENCES

- Becker, H. J., & Epstein, J. L. (1982). Parent involvement: A survey of teacher practices. The Elementary School Journal, 83 (2), 85-102.
- Chavkin, N. F., & Williams, D. L. (1985). Parent involvement in education project. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Lab. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 266 874)
- Coleman, J. S. (1991). Policy perspectives parental involvement in education project. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Lab. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 266 874)
- Coleman, J. S., & Hoffer, T. (1987). Public and private high schools: The impact of communities. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Davies, D. (1988). Benefits and barriers to parent involvement. Unpublished manuscript, Boston University, Institute for Responsive Education, Boston, MA.
- Epstein, J. L. (1984, Winter). School policy and parent involvement: Research results. Educational Horizons, 70-72.
- Epstein, J. L. (1986). Parents' reactions to teacher practices of parent involvement. The Elementary School Journal, 86 (3), 277-294.
- Epstein, J. L., & Becker, H. J.. (1982). Teachers' reported practices of parents involvement: Problems and possibilities. The Elementary School Journal, 83 (2), 103-113.
- Epstein, J. L., & Dauber, S. L. (1989). Teacher attitude and practices of parent involvement in inner-city elementary and middle schools. Report No. 32 Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools.
- Foster, K. (1984, March). Parent advisory councils: School partners or handy puppets? Principal, 26-31.
- Fruchter, N. (1984, Fall). The role of parent participation. Social Policy, 32-36.

Gordon, I. (1978). What does research say about the effects of parent involvement on schooling? The Evidence Continues to Grow, Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Gordon, I. J., & Breivogel, W.F. (1976). Building effective home-school relationships. Newton, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Greenberg, P. (1989, May). Parents as partners in young children's development and education: A new American fad? Why does it matter? Young Children, 44(4), 61-75.

Henderson, A. (1987). Parent involvement improves student achievement. The Evidence Continues to Grow, Columbia, MO: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A. T. (1988). Parents are a school's best friend. Phi Delta Kappan, 148-153.

Herman, J. L., & Yeh, J. (1980, April). Some effects of parent involvement in schools. The Evidence Continues to Grow, Columbia, MO: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Lazar, I., & Darlington, R. B. (1978). Lasting effects after preschool. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 175 523)

Lightfoot, S. L. (1978). Boundaries and Bridges. Worlds apart Relationships between families and schools (pp 38-65). New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Lightfoot, S. L. (1981). Toward conflict and resolution: Relationships between families and schools. Theory into Practice, 20(2), 97-104.

Merz, E. S. (1986). Conflict and frustration for school board members. Urban Education, 20(4), 397-417.

Rasinski, T. V. (1989, December). Reading and the empowerment of parents. The Reading Teacher, 226-231.

Schlossman, S. L. (1983). The formative era in American Education: Overview and interpretation. In R. Haskins & Adams (Eds), Parent Education and Public Policy, 7-10. Abler Publishing Corporation.

Tangri, S., & Moles, O. (1987). Parents and the community. In V. Richardson-Koehler (Ed.), Educators' handbook: A research perspective, 519-550. New York: Longman.

Toomey, D. (1986). Home-school relations and inequality in education. In A. Henderson (Ed.), The evidence continues to grow, 60-61. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Williams, D. L. (1987, February). Parents involvement in education: What a survey reveals. NASSP Bulletin, 99-103.

Zeldin, S. (1990, Spring). The implementation of home/school/community partnerships: Policy from the perspective of principals and teachers. Equity and Choice, 56-63.

Appendix A

Parent/Teacher Survey Form

Parent Involvement Survey

Question One:

How would you define effective parent involvement in school?
Be as specific as you can and give examples if possible.

Question Two:

What can a school do to encourage effective parent involvement?

Appendix B

List of Comments Made by Parents and Teachers

PARENTS - QUESTION 1

PARENTS SHOWING INTEREST IN CHILD'S PROGRESS

SUPPORTING CHILD/INTERESTED IN CHILD

Don't yell at your children just encourage them to do their best.

To bed on time and on time to school.

Parents need to take the time to learn about their children's environment away from home

The parents should never say negative remarks about a teacher in front of the child.

Knowing your child's curriculum.

Parents involved in monitoring of students' academic and social development.

Listen to teacher comments and ask questions.

Sneaking in on child during class.

Make sure children are behaving.

Awareness of how well your child is doing in his or her class.

Visiting the classroom as often as you can.

Parents need to be interested in their child and their activities.

Visiting classrooms.

Coming to the school once a week or so to see how the kids are doing.

Becoming interested in childrens' classroom. **Visiting.**

Know what your children are doing in school.

Problems - child - parent can give the school help with dealing with the solution.

Work with child when he is having problems.

Make children mind at school.

Keep up with their child's progress.

Parents are helping kids become better students.

Truly concerned not just only their children but the others as well.

Be attentive to what if any problems exist with children at school.

When a parent takes the time to become aware of events, improvement, etc. which effect their children's lives. Even if it means to take time off of work.

To encourage the child to do their very best always.

Knowing what your child's favorite subjects are and helping to develop his or her talents.

Give suggestions that will help your child.

Parent involvement is when a parent comes to the school to help with their children.

Concerned parents know what their child needs.

Need to be able to accept child and deal with whole child.

It would encourage the kids for parents to keep up with what they are doing in school.

Talk to the children - counsel - Have problems at home.

Encourage extra credit projects.

Talk to my children about changes that need to be made and what they think we can do.

Talk to child when they have done something wrong.

Dedicating specific time each night to each child.

Be supportive in all your child does.

Parents are the reinforcers.

Show child you care and are interested in what they are doing.

Let their child know they care about how they are doing.

Praise them when they do well.

However you can: Even if its doing something at home to help out.

Ask child to see work that is brought home and talk about what he is doing at school.

Show interest in your child and his work.

Support the child and talk about concerns.

Listen to childrens' problems they may have.

Take an interest in what your kids are doing.

Listen to your child's response to teacher/staff. Be prepared to take a stand for your child.

My child is much more excited if I show a great deal of interest in school.

The child sees the parent's involvement and it makes the child feel cared about as well as proud of their parent.

Parents to get involved with their children's performance at school.

If our children are going to get a good start in life the parents need to set a good example.

Get involved in plans to help with children's needs, academics or behavioral.

HOMEWORK

Parent tutoring.

Helping child with homework.

Helping with subject and homework that are difficult for the child.

Helping children with homework.

Help your child with their work.

Help child with school work.

Homework involvement.

To help child with their homework.

Help with school work.

Make sure child does the homework.

Helping with homework, encouraging progress.

SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

PTA

Getting involved in PTA.

Getting involved in PTA meetings.

Be involved in PTA, ask questions about concerns involving the children.

PTA

Going to BAC-PTA.

Attend PTA and other meetings.

Attend PTA meetings or ask for a summary from another parent.

Attend PTA.

PTA (Getting rides hard to come because of bus schedules)

Going to PTA meetings

Going to PTA.

Coming to PTA.

Member of PTA.

PTA

Support the school PTA

Member of PTA -- but not always attending all meetings.

Be involved in PTA.

Being involved in PTA.

I feel the teachers try to get parents involved in PTA.

Attend PTA meetings.

Membership in PTA.

PTA.

CONFERENCES

Attend conferences and talk with teachers.

More informal conferences.

Conferences more often.

Coming to conferences.

Go to child's conference.

Going to conferences

Coming to parent teacher conferences.

Conferences

Attend conferences

Showing up for conferences.

Conferences staying in contact with teacher.

Being involved in parent teacher conferences.

Participate in conferences.

Attend parent and teacher conferences.

Attend all conferences.

Conferences

Coming to conferences.

I feel the teachers try to get parents involved in teacher conferences.

Attending all school conferences.

Attend conferences.

Attending conferences to see how they are progressing.

OTHER SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

Parents supporting every activity that children do.

Going to events that are at school.

Participate in Open House and parent activities.

Attending home and school meetings.

Being involved in activities with your child.

Attending and participating in school activities.

Coming to Open House.

Showing up for more activities.

Attend school activities, programs, musicals, class outings.

Being involved in programs the school has for the children.

Attend school functions.

Being involved in activities.

Coming to school events: i.e. Grandparents' Day

Attend special functions.

Support the kids -- participate in special activities.

Participating with their kids.

Taking part in all activities that the parent can.

Be involved with children in everything.

Being involved in all school activities.

COMMUNICATION

Being there when the teachers need you for problems that may occur.

Contact the teacher in regards to a problem before making a judgment call.

When children have problems parents should be notified.

Contact teacher within first three weeks of start of school

Notify teachers of changes at home that may affect child's academic performance.

Parents interacting with teacher to find out what each can do as it relates to students education.

Try to figure out a solution to problems together as a team.

Apply yourself to be a part of child's education by being a part of the education itself.

Home visits by teachers once a year for all grades.

Rapport with your child's teacher.

Good communication between teachers and parents.

Keep in close contact with teachers, school staff.

If the teacher really listens to concerns, suggestions.

Parents should be able to talk to teacher as a friend and aid to their child.

Communication between teacher and parents.

Parents need to inform school of changes at home.

Keeping close contact with teacher on child's progress.

Keep in touch with teacher.

Being kept informed by teachers of both positive and negative.

Parents working hand in hand with teacher and others.

Very open talking between teacher, child, and parents.

Parent teacher contacts.

Working with the teacher to help your child.

Teacher and parents work together with the child.

Let all parents be involved in each of their children's classrooms.

Know the teacher better to help the child.

Become a team with teacher.

Very very important the teaching team is not teachers alone.

Teachers to get involved with kids.

Working with teachers and kids.

Night classes with parents letting them know what was presented to the children.

Keep in touch weekly - depending on if they have a problem.

Keep in touch with the school to find out how they are doing in the school.

Communicate when needed.

The school should tell the parent that they are listened to about their child's needs and strengths and problems.

Communication of parents - students and interacting with the school.

Communication - Information regarding students progress, interaction with other students, assignments.

Good communication and positive attitudes.

Parents need to feel that they are welcome in the school any time and for what ever they may be concerned about.

Speaking on the phone with the children.

Communicate between home and school.

Send home more notes about what your child is doing in school.

Correspondence through the mail.

Social visits with teachers.

Parents should stop by for visits with teachers and principals.

Visit the teacher and principal and get to know them. Let the teachers and principal get to know the parent.

Parents should be able to see child's textbooks, Better able to determine child's level to assist them in their work.

More student input.

VOLUNTEERING

Parents being active as volunteers in and out of the classrooms.
Helps the parent be aware of what is being studied by my child.

Getting parents involved in the classroom and in other activities.

Helping out in class when asked.

Help with classroom parties and other special events.

Helping in classroom.

Go to your kids classes and help with the class that day.

Volunteering in the classroom.

Parents helping in child's class.

Classroom gatherings.

Volunteer in class.

Volunteering in the classroom.

Parents should be involved in as many class activities as possible.

Volunteering for class functions in order to help the teacher.

Volunteers as a Home Room parent.

Volunteer in classrooms.

OTHER SCHOOL VOLUNTEER

Let each child's parent tutor for a tutoring class in the evening.
Being involved as a volunteer and showing up for different activities.

Volunteering on the playground.

Help with playground construction.

Volunteer work - working with kids on a one to one.

Friday Club

Volunteering

Volunteering for school related activities.

Becoming as actively involved as your time schedule allows in the school.

Visible active member within the school.

One who is willing to help anytime.

Willing to play an active role in the school activities.

Giving some of your time to the school and sharing in extra curricular activities with your child.

Parents to help in any way and give suggestions when they feel it can help.

Helping in lunchroom, playground, halls, teachers with work.

Volunteer.

Volunteering.

Help as much as possible in school activity.

Do what you can around the school.

Parents do very well with things such as cookie sale, popcorn sale.

Working with fund raiser.

Help plan programs with new ideas for the kids.

Volunteer for special events.

Volunteer in extra curricular activities.

Going on field trips.

Plan and execute field trips.

Getting involved in field trips, carnivals, dances.

Go on trips with kids.

Going on field trips.

Going on field trips.

OTHER TYPES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

INVOLVED IN SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

Be aware of issues brought up at school.

Parents involved in curriculum.

Parents as active participants in development of school climate.

Parents care enough to be involved in their schools decisions.

Parents involved in planning.

Know your rights as parents. Do not always accept educators as final say if not comfortable.

Parents as active participants review of professional.

SUPPORT SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Supporting the teachers and administrators.

Support the school.

Parent supports the school policies and objectives.

Support of teachers and principals.

SUPPORT OTHER PARENTS

More parents need to be involved with school.

Some do their part others don't do their part.

Tell them it would be best for their kids and help them a lot.

Getting involved and helping others get to know parents and school.

DOLLARS

Dollar support if possible.

REASONS FOR NOT GETTING INVOLVED

WORK CONFLICTS/TRANSPORTATION

Most parents are too busy to be as active as they like.

I used to be involved as a volunteer in the parent room and classroom until I started work. Now I take off work to attend something, but I can't come as often as I would like due to work.

Not much time because of working.

Getting rides hard to come because of transportation.

NO COMMENT/NOT APPROPRIATE

Chose not to fill out.

Chose not to fill out.

Chose not to fill out.

I don't know and that is the truth.

No comment.

DID NOT ANSWER APPROPRIATELY

OK as is.

Effective parent involvement in school is the most important asset for our children.

PARENTS - QUESTION 2

COMMUNICATION

ON GOING AND ACTIVE BETWEEN SCHOOL/FAMILIES

Should keep touch for good reasons not just negative.

Send extra homework.

Homework could be scheduled in advance for a week or month.
Then parent could follow and check homework easier.

Develop parent groups that will meet the total needs of the community.

Keep parents involved by letting them feel it is their school as well as their child's school.

Include parents and children in major decisions involving the school.

Find out if the parents have any input as far as what they'd like to see in the schools. (projects, classes offered, etc.)

Not make learning too hard for children.

Keep the number of children per classroom down.

Deal with problem and try to develop a solution.

Show a lot of support for the kids and parents.

Listen and get involved with the kids.

School and parents try to work as a team for support.

Teachers and staff should be encouraged or required to make a commitment to the community.

Encourage by sweetening functions.

Make school accessible.

Contact on a personal basis for conferences.

Teacher caring and more involved.

Try to have teachers get more involved in the extra projects.

Promote a casual atmosphere and caring teachers and staff.

Close personal relationships with parents.

Moral support. Even if you don't like the kids like them anyway.

Be very specific about academic or behavioral needs and provide clear solutions that are possible for parents to understand and participate in.

Make suggestions to parents now to help the child do better.

Try to let parents know to help the child do better.

Make sure information about child or situation is correct.

Keep close contact with concerned parents.

Let parents know what is going on with their children.

Let parents know how their child is performing.

Get with parents and talk, open communication.

Making sure that parents are aware of their child's progress in school.

Listen to what the parents have to say and act on it or explain why it won't work.

School should: Contact the parents on a personal basis.

Talk about problems a child has in school with the parent.

Communication - verbal.

More communication.

Have good communication between officials, teachers, and parents.

Let parents know what is happening

Taking time to encourage bake sales with parents help.

Make it known that there are things to do in school.

Neighborhood meeting once a month to get parents involved.

Call a neighborhood meeting that child go to -- Inform the parent how important their child's education is.

Schools contact with parents on a weekly basis to discuss both positive and negative.

Notify parents when things are going on.

Let parents know ways in which they can help there school and participate in extra curricular activities with their children.

Keep parents notified of all school functions.

Give recognition to parents who volunteer.

Make parents feel that they are somebody special. Give encouragement - invite to get involved. Tell them that they are needed and show them.

PHONE

Call parents about PTA meeting. Gives a feeling of belonging to the process of education.

Call the parent whenever necessary.

Call parents at work or home to remind them of special projects.

More contacts with parents through: Phone calls.

Call the parents.

Call or talk to parents to see what they can do to help.

Phone conferences.

Call parents and ask.

Call parents about their child.

Teachers contact parents over the phone more often about different functions or problems that be occurring too often.

Home phone calls.

Phone calls should be mandatory for teachers.

Call parents for both positive and negative.

Phone call with a list of ideas.

Phone conference every so often.

Stay more in touch between teacher and parent.

Teachers need to talk to parents more. Parents have their own ideas need to work together.

Teachers make effort to contact parents within the first few weeks of school.

More time for parents and teacher to meet.

Parents and teachers must meet as equals. Staff and teachers should be aware parents have assets and skills to offer.

Have teacher contact more parents.

Parent to teacher: talk when visiting.

Positive notes from teachers and principal about school happenings.

Parents should be able to meet with teachers and staff informally.

Talk to the parents a lot.

Schedule more informal conferences with child's individual teacher.

Parents and teachers work together with kids.

Have teachers and others available to parents at all times. Make them feel at ease to talk with school officials.

Letting the parents be more involved in working with teachers.

Parents can help to reinforce child's good behavior when recognized by the school.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING FOR PARENTS

More programs and activities in the evening.

Programs to be done at night.

Starting PTA at 6:00 would help parents with small children.

Have more timely meetings on weekends or early afternoon.

Working parents have a hard time attending meetings, workshops, etc. during the day.

Evening time activities.

Perhaps make it more accessible to parents who have unusual schedules.

Provide baby-sitting for families.

Provide baby-sitting.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Letters asking to volunteer once a week/month.

Send letters home telling them what child is involved and how they can help.

Send letters to let parents know when something is happening.

Notes home to notify parents of changes in their child's performance.

Send a questionnaire what they would like child to work on at home.

Written notes.

Send home bulletins regarding school projects which might require more parent involvement.

Communication - written.

Send memos to parents trying to get the parents involved in school activities during and after school.

Personal notes to parents.

Newsletters as to the school functions.

Send letters home when in trouble.

More flyers sent home with children.

Notes home.

Send plenty of notes home.

More contact with parents through: notes

Send notes home.

Letters through the mail rather than notes home. K-12 have a tendency not to get them to the parents.

Letters to the parents.

Sending fliers making an activity fun.

Send messages home to parents to see what ever they can to help.

Send more notes home.

Keep sending announcements for the parents involvement.

Send more information out to families about different activities going on and how they can get involved.

PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

Lunch with the kids.

After school activities.

Project in gym.

Activities for children and parents.

Skating party was a good parent involvement activity.

Parents to share in activities in school and out.

More get-togethers with parents.

Pot Luck suppers.

Have award night in the evening or banquets.

To have functions at school that involves both parent and student.

Have kids and parents get involved in different things.

Have more activities where the parents can get involved.

Parent/Child trips and activities.

Get parents interested in school activities, field trips.

Have children in various activities that parents can come and participate in or watch.

Plan family activities within the school.

More activities such as roller skating, outings.

Offer parent/child activities.

Make activities fun for children and adults.

Have parent/student involvement activities.

Provide many opportunities for parent involvement day/evenings.

Opportunity for parents/child activities at school.

PARENT EDUCATION

Parent training opportunities.

More meetings.

Have more parent meetings.

Presentations by teachers for parents concerning school expectations.

Different parenting classes/speakers.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERING

Invite parents to participate in classroom activities.

Volunteering.

Have more field trips so parents can go on them with the kids.

PTA.

Parents should participate in "Praise Day".

A different parent to come and work in a classroom a day.

Pick parent every month to participate with their child in their class.

MANDATORY PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Talk to the parents about taking part in their child's school life.

Encourage parents to get involved more.

Involve more parents.

Get parents involved with different things.

Show up for meetings.

Make it mandatory for parents.

It should be required.

Make parent involvement mandatory.

Encourage parents to come in more often to see how the children are doing.

Parents give equal time to the school.

Encourage involvement through PTA, social groups or volunteer groups.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CHILDREN

Have a class to tell parents what help is needed and how they can help.

Children should encourage their parents to come and get involved in school projects.

Need more encouragement from the children.

NO COMMENT

No comment.

Not sure.

I don't know.

If a parent just isn't interested nothing will work. I don't really know how to answer this effectively.

DOING A FINE JOB

OK as is.

Doing a fine job.

OK as is.

Feel schools are doing a fine job.

This school is doing a very good job.

Communication better that years before, more involved with students.

CHOSE NOT TO FILL OUT

Chose not to fill out.

Chose not to fill out.

Chose not to fill out.

TEACHERS - QUESTION 1

PARENTS SHOWING INTEREST IN CHILD'S PROGRESS

SUPPORTING CHILD/INTEREST IN CHILD

Active participation of the parent in their child's education at school.

Ex: Support with discipline problems and follow through actions.

Support with discipline problems and follow through actions.

Assisting with discipline.

Establishing rewards and consequences - Being aware of what is going on in their child's education.

Encouraging and motivating the child.

Involved and accountable on a day to day basis with teachers and child.

Being actively involved in decisions that affect their children.

Visit classrooms and aware of curriculum.

Visiting classrooms.

Involved in the process of their child's education.

Parents are aware of what the student is doing in school.

Important for the child to see that school and home are both working together.

Sometimes the best parent involvement is helping their child at home.

Getting students to school on time, rested, fed and prepared for the day.

HOMEWORK

Making sure homework is done.

Parents working with children on homework and other out of school projects.

Active participation of the parent in their child's education at home.

Supporting the student at home assisting with homework projects, discussing content.

SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

PTA

PTA

PTA

Parents getting involved in PTA

Active PTA of parents and teachers

Involved in PTA

PTA

Being involved in school committees - PTA

Attend PTA

CONFERENCES

Parent involvement at a minimum should include and start with attending conferences.

Conferences.

Attend all school conferences.

Coming to conferences.

Conferences.

Attend conferences.

OTHER SCHOOL FUNCTIONS

Parents attending assemblies, programs.

Open House.

Attend school sponsored activities.

Interested and participating - praise day.

COMMUNICATION/ TEAMWORK BETWEEN PARENT TEACHER

Systems that encourage regularly scheduled communication times will assist in keeping parents involved in their child's progress.

Consistent communication with teachers.

Good communication with teachers.

Parents calling teachers to check on child's progress at least once weekly.

Parents meet and visit with child's teachers.

Sometimes the best parent involvement is communicating often with the teacher through notes and telephone calls.

Teachers and parents working together to help children learn.

Parents working with teachers to provide quality education for children.

Some parents need their child's teacher as a friend.

VOLUNTEERING

CLASSROOM

Parents helping in classrooms.

Parents getting involved in classroom.

Parents involved in classroom daily.

Parents involved in classroom activities.

OTHER SCHOOL VOLUNTEERING

Volunteer at school.

Parents volunteer at school based on possible scheduling needs.

Parents sharing talents with school.

Getting parents interested and participating in school and in school activities.

NOT APPROPRIATE

Parent involvement at this school is nil. You don't demand things from parents.

School offer programs that they the school thinks the parents need, not what the parents themselves want.

When the experience is meaningful to the parent and their child.

TEACHERS - QUESTION 2

COMMUNICATION

ONGOING AND ACTIVE BETWEEN SCHOOL/FAMILIES

Parents involved in setting policy, planning field trips and units.

Be open, non-threatening.

Listen to ideas that parents have and don't say "that is a good idea" and forget about it.

Ask for specific things from parents.

Parents need to be made aware of how they are influencing their child's progress in a positive manner.

Plenty of advance notice for all conferences, activities. Several notices are given.

Communication is a big factor. Notices need to be sent out in advance.

Teachers need to communicate.

Notice of up coming events so they can make arrangements to participate.

Beginning of year hold a meeting after school to discuss the different ways parents can get involved.

Call or visit each parent at beginning of year or as new students are admitted. Make initial contact.

Have daily contact with parents.

Empowering parents during interactions: phone calls, conferences, notes home, etc.

More team work is needed - offer free lunches for parents who volunteer at school.

Let parents know how important and positive if they are involved in their child's room.

OPEN POSITIVE CLIMATE

Teachers need to make themselves available at parents convenience.

Positive statements.

Appreciation expressed for whatever level of involvement is demonstrated.

Encourage involvement by appreciating involvement.

Teachers must make an effort to involve parents in a positive way.

All staff including office warm, open, receptive and appreciative of parents.

Provide a climate of togetherness: parents with parents, parents with children, parents with teachers.

Make parents feel welcome when they come to school to visit, attend meetings, etc.

The school personnel should be friendly to all and encourage all to participate in all school activities.

Try and make parents feel comfortable. Responsibility placed on individual classroom teacher.

Open door atmosphere.

Be approachable and understanding.

To encourage parent to visit and feel welcome anytime.

Parents feel welcome and comfortable.

PARENT EDUCATION

Provide training - How to work with children on: homework, behavior expectations, training in volunteer skills needed.

Provide training - How to work with children at home, behavior expectations, volunteer skills needed.

Help educate parents and facilitate their growth not only their children's.

Educate parents on how they can help their child in school.

Provide parents programs.

Schools can provide parents with a parent room.

Mandatory parental meetings.

All teachers should be members of the PTA and invite or even volunteer to pick up a parent and bring them to PTA every month.

Have activities to teach parents to be able to help their children learn.

PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITIES

School wide activities involving parent and child.

Sponsor parent/child activities after school at least quarterly.

Activities which focus on student, parents and staff should be made routine so the child can see the unity of parents and teachers.

Activities where parents involvement is a must and a pleasure.

Have parent activities to allow parents to get to know each other.

Support services - Child Care, flex hours for working parents.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Invitations to events and classroom.

Providing a diversity of involvement options.

Teachers should have classroom activities that involve parents even a little program involving a reading activity.

Have classroom volunteers that are parents.

Invite parents to visit classes in session at least one time during first quarter.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

Provide opportunities for teachers to come in late or leave early for times spent after school hours in Parent Involvement Activities.